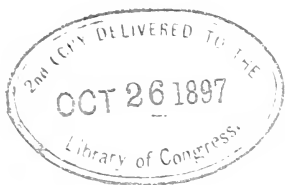


IDYLS TWAIN

LLOYD DOBIE



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IDYLS TWAIN

SONNETS

AND

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

BY



LLOYD GOBLE

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CHICAGO

CHARLES H. KERR & COMPANY

1898

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IDYLS TWAIN

WHERE HIDE THE HEART'S DELIGHTS.

“Little Pixies, cease your swinging
In the boughs above;
Cease your chatter, cease your singing
Idle songs of love.
On those golden sunbeams straying
Through the leaves, come down
In a fairy circus, playing
Acrobat and clown!

“Tiny tumblers, trip it lightly
On this mossy stone;
In and out so brisk and sprightly,
Faster, every one—
Faster to the swell and sinking
Of that merry tune,
Faster yet, the muffled clinking
Of your golden shoon!”

'Twas but the childish babble of a youth
Who, 'neath an old oak tree, gazed upward at

The rustling canopy. The summer winds
Blew lightly and the branches idly swayed,
While here and there a breadth of azure showed,
And through the rifts the sunlight downward
poured.

So earnestly he gazed up through the leaves
And watched the beams of light that danced and
played

With every motion of the swaying boughs!
Who dares to say, "Mine eyes have it beheld;
'Tis thus, and thus, and there is naught beside?"
This outer world we cannot comprehend
Save only as the inner world is built,
Save only as the soul hath eyes to see;
And this—the inmost self hath power to see
And feel by just so much as it may live.

And so this youth, instinct with life, saw all
Things else alive. The brook was happy as
It babbled on and tumbled o'er the stones:
The leaves were merry, so they laughed and
danced;

The birds were filled with gladness, so they sang;
The blossoms smiled and courtesied as he passed;
The butterflies, like winged bloom, flew here
And there in zigzag caperings of glee;

And e'en the trees with loyal hearts of oak
Loved his caress and kinship with him claimed.

No sigh or whisper but it voiced some heart's
Distress or gladness; while the fairy world,
Invisible to duller eyes, was to
His subtle sense discernible; and all
The shades, the shapes, the ghosts of things that
are

Or have been trooped and gamboled 'round and
laughed,

Or wept and told him all their woes that he
Might weep and share with them their sore dis-
tress.

Oh, what a wonder-world of life and light
The childish fancy builds! The soul finds all
Things veiled in mystery and o'er and o'er
Again repeats its how? and what? and why?
And Fancy, that capricious, gladsome elf,
Before slow-plodding Reason can reply,
Extends her golden wand; and lo! what realms
Of light and shadow, skies of cloud and sun!
What seas of restless blue where simple Faith
Can spread the sails and fear nor wreck nor storm!

So now let's follow our young friend awhile,
And let him lead us where his foot-steps may;

For though all purposeless he wanders on,
Yet they are guided by an instinct that
Finds all the haunts where hide the heart's de-
lights.

Down into that deep hollow now he swings
From maple bough to bending sassafras.
He lifts the slender ferns but does not pluck
Them, for they would but droop and die; he
crawls

Through tangled brier and brake where noise-
lessly

The serpent glides away; and farther down,
Where runs the rill, he picks up smooth white
stones,

Whose grinding has required a thousand years—
And there, that bank of green! so velvety
And soft! No loom of Ind could weave a web
So fine. But see, he laughs; what can it be?

Ah, there it is; Jack-in-the-pulpit stands
To sternly sermonize the violets,
Gay-bonneted and bright, who hang their heads
Like conscience-smitten, fair, sweet, erring maids.
He climbs the steep incline and scares away
The whip-poor-will from some old moldering log
Where she has built her nest. When fairly up
The hill, he pauses just a moment to

Drink deeply of the fragrance that the wind
Has borne him. Panting still, he hurries on
To peer through that thick bramble grown
around

Some giant oak, laid low, whose mighty arms
Form trellises for clambering vines. Death stares
Not up in unmasked ugliness, for Life
Weaves for its veiling robes of tenderest green
And drapes with beauty every gaping tomb.

Before him in the path, a rattle-snake
Lies in a hideous mottled coil. It lifts
Its head in vengeful attitude; it stares
With lidless eyes, and then its warning sounds.
The youth, with beating heart wherein there lurks
Instinctive enmity, a weapon finds,
And stealthily draws near. He lifts to strike;
But ere the blow descends, within his eyes
The light of pity shines. His weapon falls
And thus he muses: "Children of the same
All-Father, we; what right have I to lift
My hand 'gainst this despised, poisonous thing?
Has man dominion but to slay? May I,
According as it pleases, kill or spare?
For ages, through these woods, such creatures
have

According to their fashion lived and died;
And now shall I presume to lift my hand
And wantonly destroy the handiwork
Of God because it dares to creep from out
Its chill, damp den to bask here in the sun?"
Half-fearing that 'twas but weak sentiment
That staid his hand, revolving in his mind
The right of man to mete out life or death.
To hold the balance carelessly and say
Which scale, according to the gravity
Of right, moves up or down; and fearing, too,
The thing he chose not to destroy, he steals
Away, while in his boyish heart springs up
A feeling undefined, intangible,
A shadow of a thought, a conscious throb
Of that sweet harmony whose first faint notes
Were sounded at creation's dawn to swell
And throb and strong and yet still stronger beat
Throughout the ever broadening noon of time.

Scarce out of danger has our young friend gone,
And walking thoughtful still, when suddenly
Before his eyes a ghostly glimmer floats;
A web of radiating bars and waves
Of silken circles swings between two boughs.
A tiny dragon at its center clings

And treacherously waits; a sudden buzz,
A spring, and fast in chains the gauzy wings
Are bound! Ah, here are evidences of
A dozen other tragedies. What wild,
Fierce butchery with talons, teeth, and claws!
What piteous cries, torn limbs, and low, faint
moans

Of anguish! Violence, gaunt, hungry wolf,
Runs riot through fair Nature's realm, feasting
On helpless innocence, and mingling snarls
And angry howlings with the glad sweet notes
Of joy. Death, ever watchful of its prey;
Death, preying on warm, unsuspecting life;
Life, till the fatal moment, ever light
And gay; and life abounding everywhere!
No shaft of sunlight falling through the leaves
But happy wings unnumbered gleam and buzz
Until the air is resonant with joy.
The frog-stool that the boy has plucked abounds
With life; no leaflet of the meadow-rue
His feet have crushed, but that small compass
bounds

A tiny world of gladness; every blade
Of grass lifts up its slender point to pierce
The star-world of a wond'ring race below;
No step but what must end some happiness—

But falls a thunder-bolt from out the heavens
Or strews with death and terror some domain,
A mighty earthquake in its ravages.

The boy, filled with these thoughts and loth to do
The slightest injury, walks carefully
Along a few brief moments, listening to
The low, sweet murmur of the wind, feeling
Within his heart a quiet gladness born
Of soothing sounds, fair hues and odorous breath.
But suddenly a brown-thrush perched upon
The topmost bough above him warbles sweet
And clear its prelude. Just a moment's pause,
And then upon the startled air it pours
A very torrent of pellucid song.
The youth stops for a moment listening,
Then like a brook with smooth unruffled face
That lightly breaks and dashes headlong o'er
A precipice, foaming and bubbling in
Its joy, his heart leaps up with ecstasy;
And through the woods he rushes gaily as
A fawn at play. Far and still farther on
He goes, following a high ridge that leads
Out toward the river's side. Here on a low,
Vine-covered mound among the trees he lies,
With head bent back and pillowed in the leaves.

Oft has he rested here and mused about
The little mound, inventing gruesome tales
Of savage life. Far down the river gleams
And sparkles in the sun. A steep rough path
Down which he makes his way, then o'er
A ledge of rock and he stands gazing at
The entrance to a cave. Darkly it yawns;
But he, with blazing torch, has often walked
Within the cavern, watching the weird play
Of light upon its jagged walls of stone,
Or searching every nook and cranny for
Some hidden specimen of savage art.
Along the river's marge, o'er golden bars
Of sand he strolls and spends a happy hour,
The river bending in a graceful curve
Where its high rocky hills have given way
To gentle slope. He finds a winding road
That leads up from the river through a growth
Of willows, then through thickets of pawpaw
And dog-wood, growing dense and dark.

Through all

This gloom, he hurries on half-fearful that
Some danger lies in wait at every turn.
But now the road emerges from the woods:
A meadow smiles before him in the sun.

How bright the sunshine is! How cool the breeze!

How sweet the busy hum among the flowers!
No time for gloomy thoughts, but happiness!
And every fiber of his being feels

A quiver of delight. He throws himself
Upon the ground and shouts aloud; the earth
Reels in his gladness; everything around
Him changes as his fitful fancy wills.
He leans upon one arm; the downy balls
Of ripened dandelion seeds, he sees
Transformed. What dreamy vision floats before
His eyes, what fancy fills his fevered brain
He tells to us in improvised rhyme.

"I am a shepherd and these are my sheep;
On the green hill-sides they feed all the day;
Here I must linger and constantly keep
Watch lest they leave me and wander away.
Home I must lead you, and early the morn
Shearers will clip off your fleeces of snow;
See how you're leaving on bramble and thorn,
Some of you, half of your garments, I know."

But now he plucks a ball and blows away
The seeds. They fly away in clouds of down.

The fancy changes, and yet once again
As he begins to give it utterance.
"Fly away, birds, on your downy white wings—
Speed, silver arrows, from frail fairy bows
Drawn by deft fingers with light silken strings
Torn from the spider-web on the wild-rose!
Speed, magic arrows, and up from the mould
Where you are falling, in time shall arise
Sweet sunny faces illumined with gold,
Smiling so prettily up at the skies."

In utter abandon, he sprawls out on
The grass and, rolling swiftly down the hill,
Spreads consternation through his bleating flocks,
While all his clothes are covered with their wool;
And birds in bevvies, arrows in great clouds
Fly through the air. He pauses as his feet
Crush through a little hillock where a mouse
Has made her nest. How nice and warm it is;
And sitting there with dizzy head, a look
Intense of feigned solicitude upon
His roguish face, he sings a lullaby:

"Hush your crying, Baby Brownie;
Close your eyes and rest,

Cradled in that soft and downy
Meadow-mouse's nest.

" 'Tis some idle fear that bothers
You and makes you cry;
Go to sleep, your anxious mother's
Coming by and by.

"Is it you are fearing, Baby,
That the meadow-mouse
Will return and drag you, maybe,
From her nice, warm house?

"Go to sleep; she is not coming
Back the livelong day—
Hear the brown bees softly humming
In their happy way.

"Dream sweet dreams, O Baby Brownie.
Brightest dreams and best,
Sleeping in your soft and downy
Meadow-mouse's nest!"

But Gilbert, Gilbert, hurry home; a long
Long way you've come; wake from your day-
dreams; see,
The sun has scarce two hours to shine on you;

Home by the nearest way, across the fields
By yonder wood that skirts the prairie's edge—
Ah, thirsty are you? Then, to that log house
That stands just off your way and you may drain
As sweet a draught from that old drinking-gourd
That little blue-eyed Mainie's dimpled hands
Will offer you as ever sparkled up
Refreshingly from cup or bubbling font.
Why do you pause? Ah, bashful, bashful boy!
Afraid of those pink cheeks and laughing eyes!
That little sprite in linsey-wolsey who
Would even dare to throw her chubby arms
About your neck and kiss your sunburnt cheeks!
Who would have been so happy with you in
Your wanderings. Then scamper off and slake
Your thirst by drinking from the marsh, or wait
Until you reach the old spring by your home.

Fast sinks the sun—no lingering now, but give
Your feet swift wings as doth become a boy
Who is not lazy save as boyhood loves
The tasks that are not tasks because they please.
The chores—a dozen things—are waiting you;
Drive home the cows and help to milk them, too,
For soon comes dusk and supper-time and night.

How fresh and cool, the evening breeze; how
sweet,

The drone of beetles in the trees blent with
The mellow tinklings of a bell; and, far
Away, the calling of the whip-poor-wills!
Aye, close you now your heavy-lidded eyes:

The butterflies have gone to sleep;
The blossoms, folded for the night;
Till early dawn, the crystal deep
Shall sprinkle down her starry light.

The sun has gone to spread a glow
Of gladness over all the skies
Of slumber-land where breezes blow
The opiate breaths of Paradise.

Oh, dreams of boyhood bright and fair!
Oh, deepest sleep! and sweetest rest!
God's hands have smoothed with tend'rest care
The pillow that thy cheeks have pressed!

THE EXTRAVAGANCES OF A LOVE-SICK MUSE.

PART I.

COOING DOVES.

“Coo, gentle doves: within your bower
Love steals and all the day beguiles—
That elfling fair as any flower
On which the eye of heaven smiles.
He hears, although ye see him not,
Your cooings in this sheltered spot.
Then coo, coo, ye doves;
Coo, ye gentle doves!

“Ah, Love has done a gracious thing!
With some caprice of joy new-born,
The hour that speeds on golden wings
To herald the approaching morn,
He gave his quiver, bade her strow
The shafts on all the earth below.
Then coo, coo, ye doves,
Coo, ye gentle doves!

"So all the world's in love to-day—
The forest, prairie, lilled pond,
The river bearing far away,
The ocean stretching far beyond;
And here hides Cupid naught to do
But listen to your honeyed coo.
Then coo, coo, ye doves;
Coo, ye gentle doves!

"How pants the summer wind with love!
How warm with passion, earth and sky!
And vines and branches twined above
They nod and whisper, breathe and sigh,
And bend to hear these doves express
In sweetest notes their tenderness.
Then coo, coo, ye doves;
Coo, ye gentle doves!"

Sweet songs the soul sings to itself, but when
It dares attempt to give them utterance
The harmonies are broken. Here, a strain
Limpid and pure, yet marred by discord ere
'Tis half expressed—a few clear notes, a hint
Of soul-transparency, but floating drift
In briefest time obscures its crystal depths,
Veiling the flash and gleam it ever strives

To throw. And Gilbert Darnell, at the age
When youth tiptoes to manhood, found his life
Stirred to profoundest depths. It sparkled, leaped
And bubbled through the froth in sudden spouts
Of song. With summer's sultriness the wind
Was freighted; fields of tasseled corn their blades
Clashed lazily and sprinkled pollen down
Like dust of gold; brown fields of stubble with
Their fruitage stored in barns all ready for
The threshing-floor shown warm; while, gazing
through

The woodland's ragged fringe, broad stretches of
The prairie might be seen, with marshes pied
And meadows newly mown. Across his path
The ragweeds leaned wherein contentedly
Grasshoppers sang; and in the tree-tops where
He passed, the shrill cicadas chorused loud.
Intense, the summer heat; but more intense,
His nature passion-stirred. Within the cool
And grateful shade, he stops a moment, with
The sweat in beads upon his forehead. Not
A sound but some responsive chord within
His breast makes quick reply. Aye, love within
The heart is multiform. A voice it has
For everything without, and ears that may
Interpret every outward thing. 'Tis life

Divinely crowned; 'tis soul-sufficiency.
But then this crowning—when 'tis done and how?
And whence the fullness of this ampler self?
What food with magic elements so mixed
That in a day, a week, a month the dwarf
Of childish sentiment has grown to its
Majority and stands gigantic in
Its passion's stature? Aye, what art occult
Have timid glances, modest looks, red lips
And crimson blushes to divine the heart's
Full self and conjure all the reason or
Unreason found in love's philosophies?

"A tiny seed some passing wind had blown
Into the garden of my heart lay long
To shine and rain insensible and grown
About by fragrant flowers. Lost in that throng,
It seemed as nothing; but within a night
It sprang up, and before 'twas eye grew tall
And opened to the sun its boll of light,
Standing the fairest flower among them all.

"Blow, lazy winds, among the trees scarce strong
Enough to wake a melody or e'en
A sigh and yet by constant dalliance,
Slow puffs and twists and turnings to let fall
A broken twig to which an acorn clings.

"A worm within an acorn shell,
A season lived I there and grew
In deepest darkness locked nor knew
The world was larger than my cell.

"But pierced the walls—a world of love
Shines bright on my bedazzled eyes,
Earth's glory that around me lies,
The blue of heaven that bends above!

"Yon butterfly that from its chrysalis
Comes forth to spread its rainbow-colored wings,
Rejoicing in its new-found, higher life
And searching for its mate among the flowers
Is of love's transformation but a type.
And there, that fairy dragon-fly that darts
About on quivering wing; how airily
It floats and speeds away with sudden dart
And turn, a flash of sunlight vanishing!

"Deep in the marsh's mud and slime,
I crawled about from day to day,
Nor dreamed so bright and fair a clime
Of cloud and sun above me lay.

"But looking up, Love held for me
These gauzy wings—a double pair—

And taught me how to dart so free
And happy through the thin blue air !

“Just as the woodman’s heaps of brush along
The clearing’s edge have first the brand applied,
A tiny blaze appearing next that grows
And curls amid the crackling boughs until
The whole becomes one lurid leaping flame;
Just as the lightning from its cloud-throne leaps.
While slowly following and grumbling low
The thunder swells with deeper rumblings as
It rolls adown the steep incline of heaven;
Just as the low-hung clouds grow thin, and earth
And heaven, lighter till the sun bursts forth,
A smile of gladness spreading o’er the hills,
While every leaf and floweret gleams with gold—
How like to these are love’s awakenings.

“As within an infant’s eyes
Wonder follows mild surprise,
Gravest doubts, and changing thence
To slow looks of confidence,
Till all suddenly the sprite
Wreathes and dimples with delight!
So love bloomed in my heart.

“As within its nest of green

Grows the rosebud all unseen
Till its husk it opes and through
Peeps with timid eyes of dew,
Bolder then in brightest dress
Blooms the queen of loveliness.
So love bloomed in my heart.

“Slowly wakes the fair young day,
Slowly fade the stars away,
Night’s dark curtains now are rolled,
Brighter gleams the sky with gold,
Bursting, flaming from afar
Phoebus heavenward drives his car!
So love dawned in my heart.

“The warm air in a tremble rises from
The earth like spirits reaching up with palms
Outspread to hold aloft the clouds which, so
Upborne, then melt away and once again
Appear far off to find yet other hands
That hold them back, until with grief at last
They into tears dissolve and fall, to thus
Find in their sorrow but the fullness of
Their joy. So, laughing merrily, they run
Down to the sea, are lifted up and once
Again return, repeating o’er and o’er

The round. And then this globe of green, with
what

Fidelity it moves about the orb
That gives it life, still pleasing in its own
Variety, its change of seasons, day
And night. So all things speak to us of love.
Not one poor thing but bears the mystic sign
The heart can recognize; while Reason dazed
Must wonder, ever asking, 'What is love?'

"Love? 'Tis constancy, 'tis change.
Love? ah, love I know full well;
Something common, something strange—
What is love? I cannot tell.

"Ask me not; this love's a thing
More than human, 'tis divine;
Ask the bird on heavenward wing,
Ask the sunward climbing vine.

"Ask the nymphs that lightly dream
On the star-besprinkled sod;
Ask the mountain drifts that gleam
Snowy summits up to God.

"Ask the waves from some far shore
Sweet with Love's own odorous breath;

Ask the waves that wildly roar—
Furious waves in love with death!

“What is love? ’tis day, ’tis night;
Now it pleases, now it pains;
Subtle drops of wild delight
Running riot through my veins!

“What is love? ’tis sweetest rest,
Wild delirium as well,
Seas to one small drop compressed—
What is love? I cannot tell.”

So, lover-like, he wandered on and on
Communing with himself and speaking out
His passion with such fervor that to him
It seemed he might stand unabashed before
The world proclaiming it to all. As bold
As any veteran of the chase, the young
Hound when the quarry is afar; but when
’Tis brought to bay and stands with antlers fixed,
The late pursuer timidly stands by
Or watches with much show of eagerness
And mouthings loud that ill conceal its fear.
And Gilbert, when he saw far off across
The glowing fields or through some opening
wood

The little cot where Maimie Cartwright lived,
Was bold as any knight that e'er laid lance
In rest for lady fair in days of old;
But as he nearer drew his courage fled,
And in its place, a perturbation such
As only timid country swains may know.

The day a half-score youths and maidens had
Proposed to spend upon the river-side.
A day upon the river! ah, what shades
Are poured so deeply down as those that fall
Upon the idler at the water's edge?
What overhanging trees so thick that but
A friendly breath of wind can find its way
To fan the loungee as he leans beneath,
Forgetful of all things but that sweet sense
Of calm enjoyment. Dulcet sounds pervade
The air—the splashing of a minnow as
It leaps and falls again into the tide,
The twitter of a swallow as it skims
Above the silver surface, now from some
Thick bower of branches comes the cuckoo's call,
And all the myriad notes that blend in such
Mellifluous harmony. The angler finds
A nook 'mid gnarled roots of sycamore
That overhang some pool where he may drop

His line and watch it to his heart's content.
And then that dreamy pastime when the light
Canoe with lifted oar floats lazily
O'er placid depths and shingly shallows till
The dreamers' vision of the noonday feast
Beneath the old elm leads them to the shore.

Oh, hills of deepest green and darkest shades
Beneath the flood of summer's purple haze!
With all thy sheltered nooks and secret bowers
Where youths and maidens, with their hearts
attuned
To all the passion-laden harmonies
That Mother Nature sings, may spend the long,
Long afternoon! But now, the day far-spent,
They lingered yet some moments in a cave
Slow-lab'ring Time had chiseled from the hills.
Through winding passages that broader grew
Or narrowed to small openings, they viewed
Each quaint formation—shapes fantastic in
Relief carved on the limestone walls. A sense
Of awe crept over them for every word
That in the air confined was uttered had
A Titan's voice; and when they listening stood,
Deep was the solemn stillness reigning there
And broken only by the ghostly moans

And hollow soundings of the air that swept
Through breathing crevices. But our two friends,
These lovers twain—for Gilbert better than
The others knew the cave, admiring most
Its hidden mysteries—had farther strayed
And stood forgetful of all things save that
They waited there alone. To Gilbert, who
Had often dreamed away an idle hour
Within the gloom, it had become a hall
Of fantasy. "See through the gloom those forms
That move about—fair dames and stately, tall
In queenliness, and crested chieftains in
Their war gear clad; while palsied hands grow
firm

With memory's own youthfulness and wake
From trembling strings rich harmonies that float
About us here, enmeshing us within
A tangle of delight." Thus on he went,
His childish fancies babbling, till at last,
Remembering their companions, they sought
once

Again the light of day, but heard no voice
And knew that they were left to choose what time
They would upon their homeward way. But now
This joke, as jokes must often prove, was but

Love's opportunity. Nor need we ask
How in his wooing fared the love-sick youth.

Far in the west the sun was sinking, and
Like little children strayed from home, they went
Hand clasped in hand. Care makes us aged, Joy
Would keep us children all our lives. Unchained,
His fancy where it listed roved. He told
Her that so often when he walked, a nymph
Or dryad robed in leafy draperies
Would flit before him like a shadow, call
Him onward beck'ning with her snowy hand.
And now he saw the creature once again;
Could she not see? There, in the hawthorn shade!

“Ah, deep within the forest green,
With bounding step she hurries by,
Then stops behind yon leafy screen
And looks at us with roguish eye!

“See! there she beckons; let us go;
With step as light let's hurry on—
As lightly as the bounding doe
She leaps and beckons and is gone.

“Nor through the tangled, leafy maze,
Can we seek out her hiding place;

Through all these doubtful winding ways,
Her fleeing footsteps leave no trace.

“But listen! Ah, my forest maid,
Thou nymph or shadow, we can hear,
From out thy secret, sheltering shade,
Thy laughter rippling sweet and clear!”

So by the nearest way they reached her home;
And he must stay for supper, too; nor to
Decline their invitation had he will.
So stayed he till the stars came out, going
At last, treading the dewy pathway with a step
So light he seemed to float love-crowned upon
A sea of glittering stars. What need had he
To hurry home? The night was beautiful.
Why seek a pillow where his joy should war
With sleep and smile a restless conqueror?
The world moon-washed was radiant with de-
light;
There by the old decaying log whereon
He sat the season's first fair gentians bloomed.

“Little fringed bells of blue,
Lift your sparkling eyes;
Let each tiny drop of dew
That serenely lies

Softly folded upward gaze
At the starry skies.

“Fairy lamps that flash and blaze,
Fade, then faintly glow—
Flash and fade—your fitful rays
Kindly downward throw
From the purple mists above
On the earth below.

“Silver stars and gems of dew,
Though you shine so bright
From your own soft beds of blue
All the still clear night,
Shine there yet from soft blue eyes
Love’s diviner light.”

PART II.

CAWING CROWS.

“What a darkling whirlwind of clamorous crows
Sweeping and circling about on the hill!
Circling and sweeping—still faster it grows,
Slower and slower, at last it is still.
Still but a moment—a single rude note,
Then a harsh, discordant wild chorus of caws!
A torrent that gathers from every black throat,
A flutter of wings in that thicket of haws!

“Why do you vex me with all of that din?
Wherever I wander, you’re sure to be there.
The brown thrush’s fine-fluted notes scarce begin
But are drowned in a deluge of turbulent air.
The chirp of a robin, a meadow-lark’s reel,
A field-sparrow’s twitter—ah, these would I
hear
Instead of this tumult; no joy can I feel
While these sable, ill-omened crows linger
near!

"Then off to the wild-wood and vex me no more;
I crave from this torment a moment of rest;
'Tis time you were seeking your haunts and once
more

Each ebon pair building a rough ragged nest.
The south wind is blowing and warm is the sun,
While up in the locust the oriole sings;
But ah, my weak spirit, too feeble to run,
Must crawl about dragging its poor, tattered
wings."

Though Love is blind, that spider, Jealousy,
Has full ten thousand eyes, and weaves her web
That she may feast on buzzing insects caught
Within the balmy, spiced atmosphere
Of vermeil-hued Romance. Romance, that realm
Of crimson-tinted foliage beneath
Blue bending skies, a kingdom like unto
The dreams that old star-gazers oft have told
About Earth's sister planet, blushing Mars.

'Twas whispered by the gossips that a youth,
More handsome or with larger bank account,
Won glances from fair, mercenary eyes;
And Gilbert, of its truth half-conscious, found
(Though winter's storms had come and gone,
and all

The earth was smiling once again) no joy
In all the gladness 'round him. Everywhere
He went, o'er soft, green hills or in the cave's
Chill gloom, a dark foreboding haunted him.

"What maze of sight and sound I see and hear!
Within this dream-lit hall I stand and gaze
And, wond'ring, view each ghostly form that
plays

A constant change--the smile that to a tear
Condenses ere it warms the heart; the dear
Sweet form I fain would clasp in warm embrace
Seems changed to snowy marble and her face
So fair is cold and bids me come not near;
While those sweet sounds that, flung from silver
strings,

Spake to my soul a gracious harmony,
Breathe only sobs and sighs and whisperings
And dark forebodings dread--such things as be
In store for him whose fevered fancy brings
His worthless dreams in change for charity!"

And so he found at last his rival had
Supplanted him; and in a roaring rage,
He flamed up, all his injured soul on fire
With hatred. Burning for revenge, this youth,

So sickly sentimental, looked no more
With eyes of am'rous softness, but with balls
Of blazing fierceness. Out into the night,
He walked alone and thickened all the air
With an unchained, volcanic fullness of
Invective. Long he walked and raged and roared,
And faster walked as fiercer waxed his rage;
Till finally his frenzy had passed by,
And o'er him came a sense of helplessness.
When crazed with wrath, he might have braved
A thousand dangers; now despair had seized
On him; fear crept into his heart; a chill,
Gray mist had fall'n on wood and plain and he
Was damp and cold; uncanny creatures swarmed
About or lurked in ambush, all in league
To do him each some dreadful injury.

"Dip, somber wings, from out the murky air;
Laugh, loathsome harpies, in your frenzied
glee,
And drown the shrieks and cries of wild despair
With taunts and jeers and fiendish mockery!

"Ye skulking ghouls that prowl the darksome
wood,
Fierce howling demons, at the midnight hour

In vengeful struggle strew with your own blood
The ghastly prey ye greedily devour!

“Dark stagnant fen, where hideous reptiles glide
Through reed and brake all rank with poison-
ous breath,
And glow-worms crawl, and slimy creatures hide,
While every wind, pest-laden, whispers,
‘Death!’

“Wan, sickly moon, gaze through the chill, gray
mist,
All ashen pale with that cold, ghostly smile;
While here to these low-breathed words I list:
‘I’ll claim my own—not yet; a little while!’ ”

“A little while?” How long? a day? an hour?
A moment of such torment was a hell.
The instinct of self-preservation when
Some outward injury is offered stayed
His hand that would have otherwise his own
Destruction sought. Death stood there specter-
like,
As grim and gaunt a phantom as e’er reached
A ghostly hand with which to seize its prey
And drag it to its loathed charnel house.

“An icy hand is clutching at my heart;
And now instead of bounding life that sped
Through vein and artery and tiny thread
With joyous rioting and sudden dart
And turn and plunge, I feel that chill blood start
So tardily with each slow beat—like lead
It creeps along till every sense seems dead
Save that dull ache that to my farthest part
Finds way! My life is naught but living death!
My quivering flesh, but dull, cold agony!
Those rigid fingers yet more fiercely clasp
And tug and pull! Once more my struggling
breath
Contends ere yielding up the victory,
Thus ending all in one convulsive gasp!”

But no—next morn when on his face a look
So woe-begone, his sister saw and laughed
At him and, with a stimulating sort
Of sauciness, a volley fired at him
Of most impertinent remarks, he stood
Up straight and, with the proper stiffness, curled
His downy lip and tossed his head and swore
By radiant wreaths of holy smoke that, for
The simpering thing, he did not care a straw.

SONNETS.

TO JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

Sweet singer, as you twang the quiv'ring strings
Of that old harp whose tuneful melody
Fills all our hearts again with boyish glee,
Or, melting into tend'rest pathos, brings
To mind some sweet, sad joy that closely clings
And twines new life about our hearts, as the
Old ivy decks with green the storm-rent tree—
Now, while you sing, the "clearer twitterings"
In leafy depths I hear, while breezes blow
To me the breath of clover bloom; the stream
From its pellucid depths chants music rare
In liquid laughter like the tinklings low
Of fairy serenaders in a dream,
Till, drunk with joy, I'm lost to every care.

MORNING.

A pale, soft glow lights up the eastern skies;
Deep silence reigns about us everywhere;
How fresh and pure is the chill morning air;
While sparkling dew in fading moonlight lies
Like flashing diamonds or like fairy eyes
That laugh at us—till suddenly the bare,
Old, rough and rugged mountains smile in rare,
Rich robes of rosy light. In glad surprise,
The song-birds join in choruses of glee;
From fair green meadows, valleys, plains and
hills,
We hear the mingled notes of joy and praise—
The sober joy of Age, the ecstasy
Of Youth when every tingling fiber thrills
With all the gladness of our childhood days.

EVENING.

The sun sinks down behind the western hill;
With pencils long of flashing light he throws
O'er all the canvas of the sky bright glows
Of golden glory; far away the trill
Of some sweet singer, fraught with all its skill
Inborn, pours out upon the breeze that blows
To me a flood of melody; while grows
The evening twilight faint and fainter till
The world is wrapped in slumber 'neath the folds
Of night. Oh! may, within the distant west,
The sunset of our lives their skies adorn
With glory no less bright than evening holds
Above a sleeping world. So may we rest
Till brightly dawns the everlasting morn.

DREAMLAND.

When restful slumber gently shuts the lids,
Like fringed curtains veiling out the light
From our tired gaze, and dusky-mantled Night,
The world enfolding deep in shadows, bids
All Nature rest in calm repose, when streams
Of liquid silver laugh in wild delight
At Luna's image like a dancing sprite,
The fairy goddess of the land of dreams
Trips gaily outward through wild wooded bowers
Where merry elves in wanton revelry
Unite, or leads us by the hand to view
Some mighty castle where for seeming hours
We watch the moonbeams paint all rosily,
Arcades of marble mists we wander through.

SILVER CLOUDS.

Oh, clouds of silver white, float softly by!

Beneath the shade of this old apple tree,

Decked out in green so gay and gorgeously,
In discontent and lazy dreams I lie;

And far above, I see thee poised on high

Like phantom ships that sail a boundless sea.

There rocking on the unseen waves must be
Rest for the weary spirit that would fly

Away with thee beyond these prison walls,

Where in God's love and sweet security
The sunshine of his smile forever falls—

Oh, to that glorious cloudland could I flee
Where now a spirit voice so softly calls

And angel hands so gently beckon me!

BENIGHTED.

In that thick, heavy gloom that gathered 'round
Me as I wandered onward through the night,
Not one faint ray could struggle through to
light

My pathway with its friendly gleam, no sound
To break the awful stillness, while the ground
Began to tremble, toss, and heave with might,
And part beneath my feet, till wild with fright
I shrieked aloud and gave one mighty bound;
But looking up I saw two beaming eyes
Wreathed with dim, smiling features softly float
Through that dense blackness. Steadily
on me

They gazed; and as I stood there in surprise,
The darkness vanished, while a tiny throat
Piped soft and clear its low, sweet melody.

THE PILGRIM.

He paused; then sat himself upon a stone,
And looked about upon a valley, strewn
In wild confusion with the fragments hewn
By the Omnipotent, building His own
Eternal, snow-crowned pyramids. Alone

He sat, unmoved and statue-like. High noon
Beheld him weary, while he now must soon,
Through shadows, grope his way. The sun had
thrown

A flood of glory over all the hills;
And, bursting into flame, the western skies
Became a holocaust that into night
Should fade; and as a sudden splendor fills
The heart with rapture, so his stony eyes
Grew radiant with a celestial light.

THE GNOME.

Beneath a frowning ledge, beside a stream
I stood, and heard its waters froth and foam
Among the crags; then back through vaulted
dome
And cave-like dungeon, watched the fitful gleam
Of crystals flashing now a straggling beam
Of light. There in the gloom, I saw a gnome
Or elfish goblin stealing from his home
And, blinking at me, sit within a seam
That splits the granite walls. A golden crown
With flashing gems was on his head, and stars
Of opal, emerald, and ruby shone
From fairy circlets; but a sullen frown
His forehead darkened, and with ghastly scars,
That visage cold seemed frozen into stone.

A FRIENDLY GLEAM.

I groped my way through darkness wild and
black

As ever sent a wanderer astray—

No friendly moon to guide me on my way ;

No star with merry twinkle to laugh back

My fleeting courage ; but the old oaks tossed

And clashed in blindest rage, as demons might

When Chaos ruled o'er universal night.

Far from my path I strayed, hopelessly lost,

Till suddenly a ray that pierced the gloom

Led me a wand'rer home. Oh! may that soul,

That long has strayed away and deems his goal
Can only be inevitable doom,

Catch some stray beam that struggles through
the night

To kindle hope and lead his steps aright.

A RECOLLECTION.

The song that long ago I heard her sing
Comes floating backward through the vanished
years;
And that same smile that drove the vagrant
fears
From out my boyish heart, nor failed to bring
A full-blown gladness, like the opening
Of rose-buds in the warm June days, appears
With all its genial warmth and straightway
cheers
Me as in that old time--a breath of spring
That drives away the winter chill. Aye, come
From that fair land, and as in days of old
Trip lightly here beneath the orchard tree;
Then rest awhile, lulled by the drowsy hum
Of bees, while I blend with thine own pure gold
This wealth of roses I have plucked for thee.

TO A CALLA LILY.

Thou fair, frail thing so sweetly blooming there!

What happy lot is thine to sit the while

Within the genial sunshine of the smile
Of her who guards thee with her tend'rest care,
Who keeps with jealous vigilance thy fair,

Pale beauty from such things as would defile

Its innocence—her heart, as free from guile
As thine own loveliness, claiming full share
Of all the graces that those forms of light

That gather 'round the Great White Throne
above

Possess. Oh, who could fail to envy thee?
Then bloom thy fairest, robed in purest white,
Emblem of goodness, gentleness, and love,
And fitting emblem of her purity.

ULLA.

She stood there waiting at the market-place,
A quaintly shapen jar upon her head,
Then turning, with shy glance and doubtful
tread,
Passed down the row of stalls, her girlish face
With sweet timidity and just a trace
Of mild confusion blooming there. Rose-red
It deepened as bold youths would praise, in-
stead
Of merchandise, her charms and gentle grace.
Oh! happy swain, who 'neath the olive trees
Shall read in those soft eyes a warmer glow
And mark upon her cheeks a rosier bloom
While am'rous eve's own lazy, loitering breeze
Shall idly sing of that glad overflow
From hearts so full they scarce have beating-
room!

THE CHERUB.

In that cool, sheltered nook where smiling Morn
 Beguiled me by her charms and loveliness,
 A sleeping cherub lay in nature's dress
Of dimpled beauty. Every star and horn
And bell of bloom that grew there to adorn
 His velvet couch seemed bending to caress,
 With every breeze, his half-hid limbs and bless
In fragrant praise the fair, the heaven-born.
With noiseless tread, lest I should put to flight
 The vision, I drew near and o'er the fair
Form, wondering, bent; when suddenly his bright
 Eyes ope'd and lightly, as in summer air
The dew-drop fades, he vanished from my sight
 And left me gazing at his impress there.

WOODLAND GLOOM.

Oh! dark and solemn depths of woodland gloom;
In awe and reverence I wander here,
While stealing o'er me comes a vague-like fear;
Thy voices sound like echoes from the tomb,
And in thy air I breathe a faint perfume
Like that from snow-white lilies on a bier,
Or like the odors breathed by those who near
The land where bright, eternal flowers bloom.
The gentle murmuring of thy rustling leaves
Seems but the sigh of some poor care-worn soul
That wearily his heavy cross lays down,
Rejoicing that the Reaper with His sheaves
Sees fit to bind him, that the long-sought goal
Is won and on his brow is placed a crown.

NO SYMPATHIZING TEAR.

Our greatest griefs are those that we alone
Must feel, the griefs that we refuse to share
With all the heartless horde, who only bear
With cold indifference the heart's deep groan
Of anguish. Dirges in an undertone
For our departed joys we chant, yet dare
To laugh and hide our woes with nicest care—
To act a part we cannot make our own,
And smile up through our tears at all the gay
Frivolities that only serve to bruise
Our aching hearts. Oh! may God's bound-
less love
Heal all our wounds and chase our gloom away,
And showers of joy fall down like gentle dews
Upon the earth from pitying skies above!

BEYOND OUR KEN.

We look around us on this little world,
Soft, misty robed, all golden, green and fair;
And gaze up at the moon, that through the air
Floats like a radiant bubble gaily hurled
Upon the 'breeze by laughing youth with curled
And flossy hair; then outward, farther, where
The sister planets onward roll, we stare
And mark the mighty paths where they have
whirled
For countless ages 'round the mighty sun;
Still far 'beyond, we hear in limpid blue
The untold systems o'er and o'er again
Sing out, "Eternity has just begun!"
We hear the surging ocean beat, but view
One drop and know 'tis all of finite ken.

A SHATTERED OAK.

Proud hast thou stood, nor bowed thy lofty head;
Bold and defiant, thou hast mocked the rage
Of e'en the wildest storm that to assuage
Its wrath strove mightily, then onward sped
With increased rage—from thee unconquered,
fled.

What tale of courage writ on History's page
Exceeds thine own? E'en now, when stripped
by age
Of all thy boasted strength, decayed and dead,
And shorn of every limb, thou standest there
Proud in thy desolation. Soon thy lot
Shall be as humble as when in thy prime
It was exalted. Rent by gale to share
The common fate, e'en then thou fallest not
The tempest's but the victim of old Time.

BY STILL WATERS.

Breathe low, ye reeds along the river's brim;
And calm, clear waters, smoothly glide along,
While far within thy depths a countless throng
Of noiseless shadows waver, dance, and swim
So placidly. Oh, dove on that low limb
That lightly lends, pour forth thy plaintive song
And tell of love so deep, so pure and strong
That every saddened heart and eyes grown dim
With tears might be made glad; for here in these
Deep solitudes a calm tranquility
Dispels the tumult in our hearts until
Its wildest raging lulls into a breeze
As soft as fanned the Master's brow when He
Had spoken to the tempest, "Peace, be still."

WHERE REST REMAINETH.

Dear little vale, a sense of calm, sweet rest
Falls over me; and, lingering in thy lap,
I hear the lusty "red-head's" cheerful rap
While chopping out of solid oak a nest;
And fresh from flowers my steps so rudely
pressed,
Are odors rich and rare as e'er distilled
By fairy chemists though most highly skilled
In all of Flora's arts. Is he not blest
Whose weary feet, though wandering oft astray,
Lead him to lose by lingering here awhile
In sweet forgetfulness his sore distress,
To dream amid thy beauty's wild display,
To nestle in the sunshine of thy smile
And feel the wooing of thy warm caress?

TO A BROWN-COATED WARBLER.

Thou tiny form of flutt'ring melody!
Thou feathered fountain of inconstant song!
No brooklet rippling noisily along
Its fair, green valley pours forth half the glee,
The wild abandon and the ecstasy
That gladdens thy clear notes; no noisy throng
Of wild-wood warblers piping clear and strong
Can tempt thee into boisterous rivalry.
Deep hidden in that bower where friendly boughs
Of sheltering hawthorn screen from curious
gaze
Thy sober mate within her downy nest—
There twitter low thine oft-repeated vows
And sing through all the happy summer days
The joy that's throbbing in thy little breast.

**MISCELLANEOUS
POEMS.**

BOYS AGAIN.

O these summer afternoons!
Let's roll up our pantaloons
As we did in boyhood long since passed and gone;
Long before old Father Time,
Scowling at us, made us climb
Homeward up Life's hill and put our shoes and
stockings on.

By the old pond's reedy brink,
Where the cattle come to drink,
Let us wait and watch them slowly wade out
where
All the clouds of summer skies
Dance before their blinking eyes,
Gazing in the water with a lazy, languid stare.

Then to listen to the call
Of the snipes and frogs and all!
And the gabble of the wood-ducks as they glide
In some narrow strait that leads
Through the sedge-grass and the reeds
Outward to the thicket on the water's wooded
side.

Oh! the blackbird's mellow trill,
And the old delicious thrill!
As we stood in silent rapture long ago,
Where so many joys were found
By us truants, loafing 'round
That old tropic tangle that our boyhood used to
know.

I can see the grape-vine swing
In the shady opening,
There among the tall old oaks that whisper low,
Wishing you and I were there
For a single hour to share
All the glee that drowns them in a joyous over-
flow.

'Neath the old persimmon trees,
Gently swaying in the breeze,
Shade and sunshine mingled like a mystic veil,
Let us listen to the hum
Of mosquitoes, while from some
Covert in the thicket comes the whistle of a quail.

O'er the sunny meadow-lands,
With our straw hats in our hands,
We can chase the bumble-bees that buzz and
boom

'Round the flow'rs so lazily
In their harvesting, while we
Fairly drink the sweetness of the fragrant clover
bloom.

In the wheat-field, too, we'll hide
Where the wavelets smoothly glide,
As they chase each other o'er a lake of gold.
All the world seems now to sing—
Seems to us and everything
Just as full of happiness as ever it can hold.

Boys again!—hip! hip! hurrah!
All that mortals ever saw
Of old country gladness comes back home to-day;
Flowers and sunshine, shady trees,
Laughing streams, and birds and bees
All are smiling, beckoning, and calling us away.

A SUMMER BLOSSOM.

I saw a maiden stand—
Deep hid in bloom were her bare feet
While upward reached the blossoms sweet
To kiss her dimpled hand.

And standing there she smiled—
So bright the dancing sunbeams played
In radiant circles 'round the maid
That she, this 'happy child,

Seemed but a blossom grown
A little taller and more fair
Than any other blooming there,
Brighter and fuller blown.

ALONG THE AMBRAW RIVER.

Here when the harebells blossom again!

Here when the frosty old world grows young!
Here when the snow is gone and when

Out of the smiling sky is flung
Sprinkles of stars all silvery white,
Drippings of crystal like Nectar of old
Brimming in cups made of splinters of light,
Burnished rays beaten to vessels of gold!

Here where the grasses are cool and sweet!

More velvety far, this carpet of green,
Softer and smoother to restless bare feet
Than any e'er trod on by duchess or queen!

Here where the shadows fall heavy and deep
O'er paths that lead off into dreamlands of rest,
Where the phantoms that haunt us themselves fall
asleep

Like an innocent babe on its fond mother's
breast.

Here where the elms and the sycamores lift

Vainly their hands to reach up to the skies—
Skies that peep smilingly down through the rift

Where our fair river so peacefully lies!

Ah, to just lie here and feel not a care!

Hearts burdened not with a dull sense of woe,
But light as the swallows that skim through the
air

Dipping to drink of the coolness below.

Ambraw, fair Ambraw, flow gently along;

Let the low laugh of thy wavelets at play
Be the sweet undertones in the glad song

That the earth sings to us all the long day!

Lapsing and lipping its water move on,

Smiling and dimpling far down to the sea,
Down where the deep calls from dawn unto dawn,
Calls as eternity calls you and me.

MUNDANE AND ULTRAMUNDANE.

Where does he live? In the boundless blue.

He rides and revels amid the stars,
And laughs as his charger dashes through
The sunlight's glitter of golden bars.

He tunes his harp and his fingers keep
The time, with the gay and glitt'ring throng
Of circling orbs in their onward sweep,
To the numbers grand of that endless song.

He sits enrapt at the trembling strings,
And a passing glance does he scarce bestow
On our little round of earthly things
And this fair, green planet here below.

But here, as we stand 'neath the old orchard tree
And feel the glad warmth of our bright sunny
clime,
We're as gay as the birdies above in their glee—
And, Love—don't you see?—it is nesting-time.

A RUSTIC SKETCH.

Just a quaint and homely picture of the days of
long ago,
When faces wrinkled, old and worn were bright
with youth's warm glow—
A picture of a maiden with a youngster by her
side,
Both conscious of the bashfulness that neither one
can hide.

Far off, the boisterous laughter of a noisy crowd
drops low,
Drops downward into silence as they slowly
homeward go—
As they walk slowly home from that old church-
house on the hill,
With nothing to disturb them, for the world is
hushed and still.

Yes, everything is silent, save the cricket's pierc-
ing sound
And the music of the katydids heard everywhere
around,
For they always keep insisting till I'm tired, and
I declare,
I can sympathize with Katie for the blame she has
to bear.

And now this youth and maiden—shall we listen
as they go
So contented-like along the road and walking
rather slow?
Shall we listen while they talk about the weather
and about
Just when the corn will ripen and the wheat crop
be “put out?”

And then they talk of other things, a neighbor-
hood romance,
A spelling-bee or singing-school; and then right
here, perchance,
The talking stops, for Sarah's curls, by autumn
breezes fanned,
Have thrilled him in a manner that no one can
understand.

The conversation now resumed has naught to do
with crops;
We can't tell what it is about, we only know it
drops
To nothing but a murmur soft and low as any
breeze
That ever crooned for lovers as it loafed among
the trees.

Still on they wander 'neath the stars that peep
from out the blue
And wink at one another, just as they are wont
to do
When young folks thus surrender to Dame Na-
ture's dearest arts
With that old-fashioned, timid sort of gladness in
their hearts.

Then from the highway, by the path along the
meadow's side,
They near her father's dwelling as it seems to
slyly hide
Among the tall old locust trees, there patiently
to await
In ambush for the maiden when they reach the
dooryard gate.

But now we would not watch them, even though it
were allowed,
The modest moon veils her fair face behind a
fleecy cloud,
And just peeps out in time to see John Henry as
he goes
From Sarah Jane, who's blushing just as red as
any rose.

TO AN OWL.

I.

Thine eyes are round and yellow as the moon
That floats in majesty above the night—
Fair, radiant orb, a golden mystic rune
Writ in the heavens the which to read aright,
When twilight deepens, thou with noiseless
flight
Dost seek that old decaying bough. How wise
Thou seemest, sitting there and of that light
Drinking so deeply that thy sober eyes
Are swelling with the radiance raining from the
skies.

II.

What wisdom dost thou gather gazing there
Hour after hour in contemplative mood?
The heart's desires when breathed upon the air
Are mingled with the voices of the wood;
But fateful breezes waft them back—the good
We longed for changed to evil, changed as well
The phantoms that we feared—till what we
should
Desire or loathe, diviner, canst thou tell?
What charm canst thou disclose 'gainst Time's
conjuring spell?

III.

But one sonorous, ghostly, weird "too-woo!"

While grandly uttered comes a slow reply
From some old scraggy, gnarled oak; but who

Can understand them? As the echoes die

Away we ponder, ponder still and sigh
That we must be so dull. If good or ill

Lies just before, these eyes themselves must spy
It, though wise owls may sit and stare until
The night departs and dawn beholds them blink-
ing still.

OUR SOWING.

The traveler plucks the ripened seeds
And casts them idly on the air,
While soft winds bear them gently down
And they are gone, he knows not where.

But though forgotten by the hand
That cast them forth, they crowd the way—
Rank, poisonous weeds and briars and thorns
All mingled with the flowerets gay.

Be noble thoughts and kindly acts
Alone the seeds that we shall sow,
And flowers of love on every side
In sweet extravagance shall grow.

And those who tread the selfsame paths
That we have trod will thanks outpour
From grateful hearts and ever bless
The pilgrims who have gone before.

TO THE BROOK.

Little dimpled, dancing pool,
In thy depths the shadows play
Like fair nymphs that lave in cool,
Limpid streams, then hie away.

Hie away to caves below
When the gaze of am'rous eyes
Wake in virgin breasts of snow
Flutterings of strange surprise.

Dance and dimple in the sun,
Laugh and gleam in merry glee;
Long I gaze and yet not one
True reflection can I see.

And a wreath of brighter smiles
Ripples o'er thy bonny face
At those doubts thy roguish wiles
Lead from out their lurking place.

But when on thy mossy brink
Down I kneel, how eagerly
In my feverish thirst I drink
Of thy sparkling purity!

Not a fabled drink of old,
Nectar, Mead or Hippocrene,
Served in brimming cups of gold
Could compare with this, I ween.

Ah, I know a maiden fair!—
And the witchery that lies
Mingled with the azure there
Of her laughter-loving eyes!

Laughing eyes—and yet how blind
Are mine own that cannot see
Through her dear deceits and find
All those secrets hid from me.

Yet one thing I can but know,
That her heart is fond and true,
Though her lips ne'er told me so,
Save as lips will sometimes do.

Save as lips half-willingly
Trembling yield and still protest—
Yield, then smile with ecstasy
In their sweetest way and best.

Little brooklet, should we build
On thy banks our little cot,
When the day's glad notes are stilled
Let thine own be silent not.

But through all the starry night
Laugh and sing, and Love and !
In our dreams shall thy delight
Hear as some sweet lullaby.

AS WE USED TO KNOW HIM.

I'm thinking that Happiness takes for his friend
The boy with the freckled face,
With his elbows torn and his knees scrubbed out
And a very conspicuous trace
Of soot on his cheeks and dirt on his chin,
While the locks of his sandy hair
Tassel out through the holes of his brimless hat,
And his eyes have a knowing stare.

With poke-berry juice his fingers are stained
In the manufacture of ink,
While his pockets bulge out with a corpulent air,
Too full for their contents to clink.
His ankles are scratched by the briars and thorns
As deep through the tangles he wades,
Or loafs by the creek that lazily strolls
In and out through the dark forest shades.

He whistles a tune as wild as the trill
Which the mocking-bird warbles in spring,
Or still as a shadow, an angler he sits,
Rigged out with a pin-hook and string.

The leaves gently murmur and lightly the cork
Bobs out on the waves beaming bright
With the dance of the shadows and gleam of the
sun
As he patiently waits for a bite.

AND SUCH IS LIFE.

Silken sunshine soft and fine,
Laughing lips, and eyes that shine
Bright enough—and yet how coy!—
To entrap the winged boy.

Pensive sighs and dreams of bliss,
Plighted vows and lover's kiss,
Whispered words and warm caress,
And ecstatic foolishness.

Orange blossoms, wedding bells,
Crimson blushes, fond farewells,
Mingled smiles with girlish tears,
Buoyant hopes alloyed with fears.

Wee sma' tots with outstretched hands,
Clamorous in their demands
For the wealth of care and love
None but mother hearts can give.

Busy hands in mild distress,
Struggling with their lonesomeness—
Still are heard at dusk and dawn
Ghosts of voices that are gone.

Hearts still warm, though aged now,
Frosted hair, and wrinkled brow,
Withered cheeks, and dim old eyes
Gazing into Paradise.

COPPERTOES.

Little Coppertoes, the merry,
 Laughing, dimpled, dancing elf!
In his dreams he knew no fairy
 Half so happy as himself.
How he crowed with childish pleasure
 In his beaming face at those
Little boots we fondly treasure!
 So we called him "Coppertoes."

Never golden sunlight gleaming
 From the gems of sparkling dew
Brighter than the life-light beaming
 In his roguish eyes of blue.
Sweet, the rill's low ripple after
 Gentle showers when swift it flows;
Sweeter far, the merry laughter
 And the shout of Coppertoes.

And the ringlets he is throwing
 Back are softer than the breeze
As it fans his cheeks while blowing
 Showers of blossoms from the trees.

Fond may be the warm caressing
When the sunlight woos the rose;
Fonder still, my own lips pressing
Those warm lips of Coppertoos.

Ah! though now our tears are falling,
Death but strengthens all our love;
And we hear a faint voice calling
To us from that home above.
So a sweet perfume of gladness,
Now the summer south wind blows
To us as we wait in sadness
At the grave of Coppertoos.

And our hearts look upward longing
For the Father's welcome home
With the white-robed angels thronging
'Round Him when He bids us come.
We know not the time of meeting,
God, the Father, only knows,
But we'll know the welcome greeting
Of our angel, Coppertoos.

I HEARD HER SING.

I heard her sing—and saw as in a dream

A tiny lakelet nestling 'mong the hills,
And fairy eyes with laughter all agleam

In search of perfumed sweets that spring
distills;

And as low ripples and the fitful dip

Of oars came idly on the evening breeze,
Two lovers, lost in their companionship,
Rowed silent 'neath the overhanging trees.

I heard her sing—and saw a face aglow

With all the warmth and tenderness and love
Of motherhood; and crooning soft and low

Her lullaby, the mother bent above
Her sleeping babe and gazed with eyes that
seemed

To see beyond that downy nest, far out
Along the pathway where the sunlight gleamed
Or night's dark shadows gloomed the way with
doubt.

Again she sang—and then an aged pair

Serenely smiled and looked toward the west

Where eve's low sinking sun their silver hair

Sought to adorn (ere they should seek their
rest)

With Time's old theft, the old-time wealth of gold.

So waited they the sunset, rest, and then

The waking, for with earthly things grown old,

Life's glad new morn should make them young
again.

BACKWARD LOOK.

Come, let us take a walk down through the ages,
Down amid the tombs where the buried nations
lie;

Turn History's tattered leaves and read the moldy
pages

While Clio sadly chants a dirge that closes with
a sigh.

Where is all their grandeur, all their pride, pomp,
and glory?

Search amid the ruins of the cities passed away;
Here and there a monument remains to tell the
story

Of a nation's boasted wealth now moldering in
decay.

Boast not, haughty nations, lest Time your pride
should humble,

For loud has Nature spoken with a fiery tongue
of flame:

“All that feeble man shall build, back to dust shall
crumble,
And only leave for coming years remembrance
of a name.”

Come, let us wander back; cease your merry
laughter,
As we tread the mold above the places where
they sleep,
And gaze upon the tombs that to nations coming
after
Whisper of the harvest that the angel, Death,
shall reap.

A FANTASY

Softly the twilight glows
Fade into night's repose,
And in a wonderland of dreams
I wander where low laugh of streams
So musically flows,
Where limpid waters play,
Then splash and dash away,
And wander onward, moving slow
In discontent and murmuring low
Because they cannot stay.

A tropic forest wide
Spreads out on every side;
And waving palm and tangled vine
So thickly weave and intertwine
That I can scarce divide
The tangled mass of green
That, like a glitt'ring screen,
Would bar my fancy's pathway through
That fairy-land and hide from view
The flowers that intervene.

Those flowers so fresh and bright
That open to the light
That in its deep intensity
Pours through the leafy canopy,
They burst upon my sight
Like holocausts ablaze
With all the mingled rays
Of sofetest shades and brightest glows,
The lily and the blood-red rose
In one fantastic maze!

I hear the awful roar
Of thunder-storms that pour
Their torrents down—a blinding flash,
A moment's stillness, then a crash,
Then heavier than before
The tempest's rage; at last
The mighty storm is past;
And as the dripping clouds roll by,
High arching in the vaulted sky,
God's promise is o'ercast.

A hermit lone has strayed
Into the forest shade;
And in these awful solitudes
Of murmuring brooks and sighing woods.

His quiet home has made.
A quaint fantastic bower
That in some dreamy hour
His fancy taught his hands to twine
From living branch and growing vine
And bright and fragrant flower.

Did he in sorrow's tear
See visions restful here?
Or was it deep ecstatic bliss,
Those first sweet joys of Psyche's kiss,
That led his footsteps near,
Till on his wond'ring sight
Burst forth the splendors bright
Of this fair land, so that no more
He sought the haunts he knew before
Far from this realm of light.

Where'er his wand'ring feet
Might lead, he found some sweet
Surprise; from every leafy tree
Rained showers of sweetest melody;
And in his quaint retreat,
When darkness gathered 'round
And on the leaf-strewn ground
Where wooed to sleep by opiate flowers

He lay, he heard in dreamy hours
Confused bursts of sound.

Strange melodies were sung,
And fairy minstrels flung
From trembling chords strains far more light
Than any earth-born minstrel might;
Yet still he heard among
Sweet sounds a harsher glee,
A boisterous revelry
That might have poured from demon throats
To drown that ecstasy of notes
So airy, light and free.

He seemed to trembling stand
Upon the border-land
Dividing earth and spirit realm;
While sight and sound might overwhelm
Him, yet not e'en his hand
Could reach across and hold
His friend's nor feel the cold
And clammy, deathly demon's grasp
That soon should change to fiery clasp,
Should him their arms enfold.

No longer stands he there;
A spirit form, as fair

As ever dwelt in Paradise
Or floated through the star-lit skies
 On silver clouds in rare,
 Soft draperies of light,
 With hand of snowy white
That ever pointing on before
His faltering footsteps leads till o'er
 His pathway hangs no night.

For night's dark, sullen gloom
Before an empty tomb
Has vanished as the morning light
Into his bower breaks on his sight,
 And into rosy bloom
 Burst forth the living walls;
 While soft and amorous calls
Unto its mate a piper sings,
And as through dewy boughs it swings
 A crystal shower falls.

Now as the days flew by,
Naught cared he but to lie
In dreams, for only then was he
That fairy form allowed to see,
 That spirit whom no eye
 Of flesh could e'er behold;

And as the buds unfold,
Wooed by the sun's warm, shimmering beams,
So his own spirit in his dreams
Grew confident and bold.

Alas, what child of dust,
Though weak yet prone to trust
To his own choice of good or ill,
But thinks that all against his will
Is aught but right and just.
How sadly now doth he
Obey the stern decree
That till long years shall pass away
He yet must wait, till from the clay
His spirit is made free.

The years flit swiftly by,
Till age bedims his eye,
Till feeble, faltering is his tread
And hoary locks adorn his head;
And oft a weary sigh
He breathes; but hope grows bright,
That form upon his sight
Appears whose sweet enchantment brings
The soul's release of fettered wings
Plumed for celestial flight.

And softly now she said,
"Lift up thy feeble head,
And as thy gaze is turned aloft,
Around a mystic circle oft
You sweep with tott'ring tread."
He now the ghostly play
Begins without delay;
He faster moves, he lighter grows,
Burst on his sight ethereal glows,
His spirit floats away.

THE FOUNDING OF A KINGDOM.

A man and a maiden ambitious became
And sighed, as they looked into each other's
eyes,
For a kingdom where they should win honor and
fame
By a policy deemed most exceedingly wise.

So, often together in council they met;
And many and weighty their words, till at last
They would wake with a start and a conscious
regret
That as fleet-winged moments the hours had
flown past.

Their plans at last finished, a palace they reared—
A palace of rather diminutive size,
But large enough plenty for them, it appeared,
As up from their kingdom it smiled at the skies.

Then, happy together, they sat on the throne,
These sovereigns, the subjects of each other's
sway;
And soon from their revenues wealthy were
grown,
Ten talents in kisses paid three times a day.

DOWNWARD FLOATING.

Adown the stream our little boat
Glides with the gentlest motion,
And bears us smoothly onward to
Eternity's broad ocean.

O'er dreamy depths and pebbly shoals,
Where shadows lightly playing
Trip hand in hand above the sand
With truant sunbeams straying.

In sheltered cove where every vine
O'erhanging, like the smiling
Narcissus, sips from shadowy lips
The kiss that's so beguiling.

And as in dimpling depths we gaze
To watch the wavelets dancing,
Bright elfish eyes in merry guise
Are upward at us glancing.

Then on and on, with many a crook
And curve, our course is bending,
Borne on the tide grown deep and wide,
With lights and shadows blending.

Till deeper now the shadows grow,
And dark the night is falling,
While clouds that rise to veil the skies
Grow ominous and appalling.

With sudden fear our hearts beat wild
As louder rolls the thunder—
A blinding flash! A deafening crash
Of heavens rent asunder!

But through the gloom the first faint blush,
The eastern skies adorning,
Glow warm with light till darkest night
Has melted into morning.

O glorious light! and golden floods
Of sunshine 'round us falling!
While just before, we hear the roar
Of breakers seaward calling.

AT LITTLE MARY'S GRAVE.

I stand beside this little mound that's covered
o'er with green,
Then backward through the long dim aisles of
years that intervene
Between the long ago and now I wander till my
eyes
Are gladdened by the beauty of my boyhood's
azure skies.

And oh! the joys, the raptures that the boyish
heart can feel!
E'en as I fondly hasten back sweet strains of
music steal
From out that region far away till this old heart
of mine
Is throbbing to the measure of a melody divine.

Then, too, I see bright angel faces peep from out
the skies;
Their snowy robes they've laid aside and put on
human guise,
And with their boisterous laughter and their
merry childish glee
Trip gaily out along the path I tread to wel-
come me.

No heartier welcome have I met since years and
 years ago,
When these old friends drew 'round me with their
 faces all aglow
With warmest friendship, and I clasp each
 chubby, dimpled hand
With eagerness that only old-time friends can
 understand.

One timid hand I hold and gaze within a face as
 bright
As ever shone with sunshine while the others fade
 from sight,
And as of old we wander through the green old
 forest shade,
Where flowers smiled at squirrels that peeped at
 us half afraid.

Then out beneath the great blue vault we watched
 the clouds roll by,
And child-like wondered where they went and
 why they soared so high,
And if the winged fairies ever left their forest
 home
To flit aloft among the clouds and bathe within
 their foam.

•

And then for happy hours we watched the busy
 bees that rolled
In beds of pollen till their coats were dusted o'er
 with gold,
Then laden with their treasure, flew across the
 fields for home
To rest awhile within the hive and buzz around
 the comb.

There are no friendships like the old when we
 were young and free
From selfishness and pride and cant and vain
 hypocrisy,
When in our innocence we loved just as the sky-
 lark wings
At early morn its heavenward flight, and sings
 because it sings.

The sunshine ne'er has been so bright, the bird's
 song ne'er so gay,
The rose's breath not half so sweet since that long-
 vanished day,
When 'mid the clover-bloom we played or by the
 winding stream
That with its old glad music babbles onward in
 my dream.

MIDNIGHT LONGINGS FOR THE MORROW.

I.

To-morrow's sun will gild anew the earth
That's cankered into loathed ugliness;
From poisonous mold will give new beatus birth,
And frighten these gray mists till fleet they
press
With ghostly feet the hills that in distress
They hasten o'er; will kindle into flame
The stagnant waters; with its warm caress
Bring to the modest morn a blush of shame,
And to each burdened heart a meed of joy pro-
claim.

II.

Oh hasten, winds of morning, and away!
These feet shall follow with as swift a pace
As their scant strength will warrant; this dark day
Has wearied them, but they shall find new
grace
To bear me up, and I will keep my face

Turned toward the dawn where ye are tending.
Speed;

Full soon the somber shadows will give place
To fair Aurora; then, a trembling reed
No more I'll stand, but follow where thy swift
wings lead.

THE AMISH MAIDEN.

She is such a dainty maiden,
With her tenderest grace and charms;
Rich with gold her hair is laden;
Pure and white, her dimpled arms.

Pure and fair, with just the faintest
Little hint of summer tan;
And her bonnet of the quaintest,
Queerest architect'ral plan.

Queerest bonnet e'er a fairy
Milliner with thoughtful mien
Deftly fashioned for an airy,
Happy, modest, earth-born queen.

And her eyes, the clearest, bluest,
Deepest eyes that ever shone,
Shyly told the sweetest, truest
Tale in answer to my own.

Dote, ye snobs of wealth and fashion,
On fair forms of gaudy show,
In whose breasts the warmest passion
Cannot melt the frost and snow.

But for me I'll choose the bonny
Lassie in her sober gray,
With a heart as warm and sunny
As the balmiest of May.

And where beauty fast encloses
Our wee cot with sheltering care
In a labyrinth of roses,
We will snugly nestle there.

There, to live and love while passes
Year on year with hurried pace,
Till at last the low, sweet grasses
Bend above our resting place.

JUST LET ME REST.

Just let me rest! These weary feet
Have borne me through the sultry heat
Of noontide on my way
From far off scenes where breezes blow
O'er meadow-lands of long ago
Perfumes of sunny May.

Far back I see that pathway swerve
From right to left, then crook and curve
Through shine and woodland gloom,
Then, stretching outward, swerve again
A winding pathway o'er the plain
Where wayside roses bloom.

Then onward, upward, winding still,
It climbs Life's rough and rugged hill
Until it ends at last
Where now in hope I stand before
This grave while fondly musing o'er
The mile-stones I have passed.

Then weary, footsore, let me rest!
May I, as 'gainst its mother's breast
 The babe lies dreamily
In lazy drowse of cradle tunes,
Here rest, while dear old Nature croons
 A low, sweet lullaby.

WOODS OF YOUTH.

These prairies wide may proudly boast
Of all their fields of golden grain
And herds of cattle, smooth and sleek,
That idly graze upon the plain,
And waving meadows yielding up
Their royal offerings of perfume,
And mingling with the rose's breath
The sweetness of the clover bloom.

Yes, they may bloom like gardens fair,
And offer up their wealth untold,
Reward the weary farmer's toil
And fill his ample purse with gold;
But those delights which quick uncork
The barefoot urchin's bottled glee
Are found in woods and laughing streams
Where wanton Nature revels free.

Oh, woods in spring! Thy waving boughs
And singing birds and smiling flowers
Now seem to call and beckon me
To walk in thine enchanted bowers.
What boy is there whose heart would not
At such a summons faster beat;
Or what could lend him more of joy,
Or meet response with readier feet?

And as I walk within thy shades,
The feathered pipers in the trees,
As pleased to have one auditor,
Awake their sweetest melodies.
In tuneful rivalry they pipe;
The air is laden with their glee,
The grandest of all orchestras
A concert holding just for me.

The dainty harebell at my feet
Is smiling in her robe of blue,
And buttercups and daisies white
From out the grass creep into view.
The pouting violet hangs her head
And o'er her rivaled beauty grieves,
While at the folly which she shows
I hear the laughter of the leaves.

The grand old oaks stand proudly up
As kings of all the lordly trees,
As chiefs who marshalled hosts command
And wave their banners in the breeze;
Yet battle's din and martial strife
Awake no echoes in these shades,
For Heaven's truce is over all
These shadowy vales and sunny glades.

In deeper shades I thread my way
Wherein a sunbeam scarce can fall;
Here silence reigns, for cheerful sounds
Of life are hushed and silent all.
Like some cathedral old, it seems,
With cool damp walls of crumbling stone—
Walls whose somber gray is greened
With ivy and with moss o'ergrown.

And here with bowed, uncovered head,
Like some devoted monk I stand,
Comparing with this earthly gloom
The beauty of the shining strand;
While soft and low and far away,
Like floating murmurs from the main,
The wak'ning echoes and the wind
Unite in one harmonious strain.

Oh! should I wander far away
Where Fortune leads or Duty calls—
Where'er it be my lot to dwell,
In lowly cot or palace halls—
Whate'er the future brings to me
Of happiness or toil and care,
I'll wander through the Woods of Youth
In fancy breathing perfumes rare.

THE SAME OLD SONG.

(Reunion Poem.)

Once again the same old story!
Same old tune and same old song!
With our hearts brim full of glory,
Let the old world jog along!

What care we how fast or slowly
It moves on in that old way,
When a pure and calm and holy
Joy falls over us to-day?

Shake, old Friends—we stand enraptured,
Smiling as in days of yore,
Just to think the past has captured
Us and led us home once more!

Led us home, the song of gladness
In our hearts made sweeter still
By that undertone of sadness
Woven in with nicest skill!

Chant the mystic numbers clearer,
 Silvery sweet, then faint and low;
No new song can e'er be dearer
 Than the one of long ago.

And we'll ever, in the coming
 Years that carry us along,
Find the same delight in humming
 This old tune to this old song.

FAREWELL.

Farewell, dear friend, for thou art going now;
That rhythmic beat grows fainter all the while;
Dark, purple pencilings trace thy pure, white
brow;
And those warm lips grow rigid with a smile.

Farewell! The wasted hand that now I hold
Grows chill, and in those eyes that once were
bright
With radiant life and passion I behold
A gathering mist that darkens into night.

Farewell! We cannot cross the stormy tide
With thee; and though thy lot we fain would
share,
And follow to the chill, cold river side,
Thou dost escape and leave us standing here.

Farewell! For thou art gone, and this cold clay
Lies dreamless dust, though hallowed by thy
name.
And back to mother earth we bear away
The ashes of that deathless spirit-flame.

ATLANTIS.

“Then we
Unfurled the silken sails, and from the shore,
Before the soft sea-breezes, sped amain.”

—The Voyage.

Fare thee well, lone isle of beauty, fanned by summer's softest breeze,
Folded in the warm embraces of the love-encircling seas,
Bathed in sunshine, draped in shadows, kissed and fondled and caressed,
Smiling as you nestle there in velvet robes of verdure dressed!

Every wimpling burn is laughing, every sparkling brooklet sings;
And from all thy wooded valleys sweetest, clearest music rings—
Aye, from e'en thy highest hill-top downward to the surging sea—
Everywhere, the notes of gladness woven into melody!

Fare thee well, and with thy gladness let not one
sad note appear!

Though our hearts are filled with sadness—we
who fain would linger here,

From this happy isle must wander—softly breathe
thy song and low,

Lower still yet ever gladsome! Seaward now the
breezes blow!

Gently now our bark is tossing while upon the
deck I stand,

Gazing out along thy curving, shell-strewn marge
of silver sand;

And I listen to the washing of the waves that ebb
and swell—

Ebbing, swelling, laving, lapping o'er and o'er
again, "Farewell!"

Ruthless sails!—that bear us onward as we back-
ward look and lean;

While the blue expanse of ocean broad and
broader grows between

This frail bark and that fair island, as 'neath some
magician's spell,

Sweetly there it smiles while every palmleaf waves
a fond farewell!

Fare thee well, lone isle of beauty! And the odors
thickly sown
On the breeze that bears us homeward seem the
answer outward blown
From that happy island that far in the distance
seems to be
A fair em'rald dimly sparkling on the bosom of
the sea!

OLD-HOME REST.

Like the low, contented buzzing
Of the bees around the comb,
Grew the laughter of the dozing,
Drowsy, sleepy boys at home.

Sweet that evening rest, when busy
Feet that pattered all the day
Ceased their running, and the dizzy
Heads drooped low and swooned away—

Swooned away in dreams all rosy,
As in bed, with fond caress,
Mother placed us warm and cozy
Praying God to guard and bless.

May the All-kind Mother hold us
In sweet dreams upon her breast,
And within our low couch fold us,
When we're tired and long for rest.

TO THE AMBRAW.

Gentle river, glide forever
Onward to the sea,
With thy dancing wavelets glancing
Back their smiles at me!

Glancing, gleaming, dancing—dreaming
Now in sheltered pool,
There beguiling us and smiling
Up so clear and cool!

Softly flowing, scarcely going,
All so still, it seems,—
Save some dashing minnow flashing
Forth those fitful gleams.

Dashing, darting, stopping, starting—
See him! there he glides,
With the streaming sunlight gleaming
From his silver sides!

Like some sleeping infant peeping
Up with dreaming eyes
Through its lashes, are those flashes
From the mirrored skies.

Now it, waking, thinks while breaking
Lightly into smiles,
“I, through ferny banks, must journey
On so many miles!”

So it hurries on, yet worries
Not though stopped so long,
But in trebles o’er the pebbles
Breaks in happy song.

Wond’rous story of His glory,
When from Sinai’s crown,
In the olden days the golden
Light of God shone down!

But from glowing skies o’erflowing
Now His splendor pours
Deeply over all the river’s
Reach of sycamores!

How much sadness changed for gladness
Who could dare to say,
Could we capture all the rapture
Loose along thy way?

Ah! 'tis pleasure's fullest measure—
Here with cork-and-line!
See it bobbing like the throbbing
Of this heart of mine!

Till to dullness, in joy's fullness,
All my senses steep—
Tired of fishing, now I'm wishing
I might fall asleep.

Here to linger while Time's finger,
Deaf to hopes and fears,
Slowly numbers all my slumber's
Changeless round of years.

Green, the cover folded over
Me so carefully;
While the river glides forever
Onward to the sea.

Curving, bending, winding, wending
 Leisurely its way;
Slyly hiding, gleaming, gliding
 Onward night and day!

From far meadows, pied with shadows
 Where the willows nod,
Glide forever, gentle river,
 'Neath the smile of God!

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

Father Time goes hobbling on
In his old accustomed way,
As for ages he has gone,
Never resting night or day.

On and on through weary miles
He's been tramping all these years,
Peddling out his stock of smiles
And a full supply of tears.

Mingled smiles and tears we find
Dealt to us along the way;
See he turns and looks behind
At the mile-stone passed to-day.

One more year—'tis finished; we
Cannot change it; let it rest;
What's the odds to you and me
If we each have done our best?

So to-night we cast aside
Every vagrant sense of care;
Vain regrets can ne'er abide
In the heart when joy is there.

Vain regrets, the ghostly throng,
Suddenly are put to flight,
While the airy hosts of song
Fill our hearts with joy to-night.

Ring, ye merry bells, your chimes;
Blow, ye sky-born bugles, blow;
Not a sigh for happier times
These glad hearts of ours shall know!

Pause one moment; not so loud;
Mask your joy with deepest gloom
While the old year in his shroud
Slowly sinks into the tomb.

Now 'tis over, laugh and sing,
Brush away each feigned tear;
Blow, ye bugles; wild bells, ring;
Hail with joy the glad New Year!

A LOVER'S HALF-HOUR.

No, a lover's half-hour has no definite length;
 'Tisn't measured as men measure distance or
 space—

With exactness that offers no room for a doubt—
 But varies with circumstances, person, or place.

To the one who is waiting the lover's return
 And grows not impatient nor rails at his friend,
All hail, patient hero, the palm thou hast won
 Ere the lover's half-hour is brought to an end.

To the one who is gazing in soft tender eyes
 And reads there a gladness no words can ex-
 press,
It can be but a moment though long he has stayed
 And grieves at departing—delightful distress.

To the fair blushing owner of those tender eyes
 Whose heart beats the time to his vanishing
 feet,
It is equally short, that delightful half-hour,
 And she longs for the time when again they
 may meet.

A MORNING RAMBLE.

Blow, breeze from the sunny Southland, blow!
These gentle slopes, arrayed in robes of brown
But brightening into smiles, again arise
To greet thee as thy steps, by blue-bird's song
First heralded, so eagerly draw near.
Aye, speed thee, for in simple beauty here
Thy mistress waits thy coming and those sweet
Endearments that alone thy soft arms know.

And like fond lovers parted long, they close
In warm embrace. The first glad rapture lulls
To joyous flutterings, and sweet caress
To gentle dalliance, and soft words cease;
And hills and south wind in a trance of joy
Renew again their yearly pledge of love.
And over all the earth a gladness steals—
A mingling of sweet sounds and chattered mirth;
The twitter of the swallows as they skim
Along the meadow, dipping earthward in
Their flight; the plaintive coo of doves; the bleat
Of lambs that cease their gamboling to call,
Then listen till they hear the answering bleat

Where o'er the ridge the mellow tinkle tells
Of quiet feeding on the fresh-grown grass.

Between these hills that lie like giant kine
Serenely in the sun, the little stream
Glides merrily along and smiles at us
With many a merry twinkle as it darts
Into a covert of low rushes, dry
And sere, to once again emerge and gleam
With hope that we may catch its playful mood
And follow for its gay companionship.
So let us follow as it crooks and bends
In graceful curves among the hills; give ear
To all its babble, all its childish mirth,
Its simple wisdom as it rushes on
So merrily to meet each duty that
Lies just before it, lingering not to find
A more convenient season, thus to lie
All silently in shallow, stagnant pools.
Each tiny cataract pours crystal pure,
Like joy from hearts untainted by the springs
Of selfishness. Each limpid pool runs o'er
With its low ripple of delight; and wreathes
Of smiles spread o'er it as some songster dips
And drinks its coolness, pausing yet to bathe
With twitter, chirp, and constant flutterings.

Then on we hasten and the little stream
Grows larger. Under budding hawthorns, we
Behold the yet unfinished handiwork
Of redbreast-builders. On and onward still,
Where osiers crowd the ooze, and then
Where larger willows lean with tender grace,
Where bristling locusts stand forbiddingly,
By kingly cottonwoods, swerving around
Some grove, still journeying toward the river, till
At last we wander through the gloomy shades
Of these old forest trees that proudly stand,
Huge giants in their solemn majesty.
Through all these woods what awful stillness
 reigns,
Now rudely broken by rebellious caws—
A sudden splash and ripple, and away
The blue king-fisher darts; there in the sun
The wood-grouse idly drums with muffled beat
Upon the log; and Silence breathes o'er all
Her opiate breath until her subjects, steeped
In drowsiness, dare not dispute her sway.
Oh, that glad sense of sweet repose that steals
Into our hearts while nestling here upon
This velvet couch! No wage of war between
Contending passions, for the boldest imp
Of evil hastens tremblingly away

Nor dares disturb God's peace divine within
His temple reared among these holy hills!
Rise, incense, from the swinging censers lit
By heavenly fires; and, sacred flames, leap up
From altars all ablaze with love's warm glow;
While all around us shines the beauty and
The glory that is but the smile of God!

And now hushed voices wake and faintly call
And pour their pipings low and sweet upon
The whispering wind—such gentle gaiety,
Such merriment as makes no discord with
Devotion. Laughing lightly as an elf
At play, a streamlet, dancing in the sun,
Now answers back the merry music of
A gurgling fount that gave the streamlet birth.
How sweet it is, like schoolboys once again,
To kneel where oft the timid fawn has scared
At its own image staring from the clear,
Cool depths while louder laughed the streamlet as
It ran. Through long, long years the crystal
wealth
Has poured, and danced and glimmered as it
poured.
From secret haunts, all forms of woodland life
Have crept and slaked their thirst and then forgot

Their fear to frisk and gambol in the sun;
While oft the swarthy savage, hideous
With paint, has quaffed, then mused a moment
here,
And for the time forgot his eager thirst
For war. But here are evidences of
More recent frequentings. The twang of bow,
The stealthy step no more is heard since sounds
Of axes woke the echoes 'mong these hills.
And looking close, we find decaying bits
Of ancient curbing, while the hillside shows
A tiny valley, thickly sodded o'er,
Yet plainly marking the once beaten path
That hither led. Up that same pathway and
Beyond, we find a few slight relics of
A cabin that has crumbled into dust.
Reclining on the hillock where once stood
The huge old chimney, a deep haze falls 'round
Us; shapes and shadows flit on every side—
The joys and sorrows in confusion blent
Of humble frontier life, till Fancy takes
The maze of tangled threads and weaves to her
Own liking the frail texture of romance.

AS BLOOM THE FLOWERS.

The flowerets by the wayside bloom
Unconscious of the Father's care;
And, leeward blown, their sweet perfume
Is wafted on the summer air.

Content to bloom where'er they may,
They make the humblest byways glad
With their own smiles, so bright and gay,
Till hearts grow light that once were sad.

In whatso'er secluded place
Or humble nook may we abide,
Let's with glad hearts and smiling face
Strew joy about on every side.

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